

Are You Ready for the Challenge?  
Meeting the Healthier US School Challenge Criteria

## Lesson 4: Meeting the Menu Criteria

### Lesson Introduction and Learner Objectives

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Identify all menu criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge.
2. Describe how structuring a menu relates to the Challenge menu criteria.
3. Evaluate a sample monthly lunch menu and adapt to meet the Challenge menu criteria.

### Lesson-at-a-Glance

Time	Topic	Task	Materials
5 minutes	<b>Opener</b>	Regroup Activity	
5 minutes	<b>Introduction and Overview</b>	Introduce lesson	
<b>Objective 1: Identify all menu criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge.</b>			
10 minutes	<b>The HUSSC Lunch Menu Criteria</b>	Review the HealthierUS School Challenge menu criteria.  Conduct Activity 1 using Handout 4.1: Menu Criteria Windowpane.	<b>Handout 1.2:</b> <i>Criteria for the HealthierUS School Challenge</i>  <b>Handout 4.1:</b> <i>Menu Criteria Windowpane</i>
<b>Objective 2: Describe how structuring a menu relates to the Challenge menu criteria.</b>			
15 minutes	<b>Menu Planning Structures</b>	Discuss the various types of menu planning structures  Conduct Activity 2, using Handout 4.3	<b>Handout 4.2:</b> <i>Sample Weekly Menus</i>  <b>Handout 4.3:</b> <i>Evaluating the Sample Weeks' Menus</i>

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<b>Objective 3: Evaluate a sample monthly lunch menu and adapt to the Challenge menu criteria</b>			
20 minutes	<b>Evaluate and Modify Menus</b>	<p>Evaluate sample menus and adapt to the Challenge criteria</p> <p>Conduct Activity 3, evaluate and modify menus, using Handouts 4.4 and 4.5</p>	<p><b>Activity Handout 4.4:</b> <i>Sample Menus 4 and 5</i></p> <p><b>Handout 4.5:</b> <i>Lunch Menu Worksheet – Gold or Gold Award of Distinction</i></p>
5 minutes	<b>Lesson Summary</b>	.	
60 minutes		If all objectives/activities are presented	

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### Lesson Plan

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#### Activity: Opener (before lesson begins—5 minutes)

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##### Activity Instructions:

**Note to Instructor:** The purpose of this Activity is to get people moving, and to get them to form different groups *without assigning* them to tables.

Ahead of time, count the number of participant tables. (If your room does not have tables, you will have to use another method to re-group people for this lesson).

**Do:** Ask participants to count off from 1 to n (n = number of tables in the room);

For example, if you have 5 tables, you will ask them to count off from 1 – 5.

All of the 1's go to one table; 2's to the next table, and so on until people have been regrouped.

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#### Introduction and Overview (5 minutes)

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##### Say:

We briefly discussed all of the criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge. Now we are going to take an in-depth look at the menu criteria, discuss how the structuring of a menu can help you reach the goals of the Challenge. In a moment we will evaluate and modify sample school lunch menus.

The goal of the HealthierUS School Challenge's menu criteria is to make available healthy choices for all students.

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#### Discuss the Menu Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge (10 minutes with Activity 1)

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##### Materials Needed

Handout 1.2: *Criteria for the HealthierUS School Challenge*

Handout 4.1: *Menu Criteria Windowpane Activity*

##### Say:

Take out Handout 4.1 which looks like a windowpane. Each “pane” or square has a picture or graphic that visually represents a Challenge menu criterion. Working at your tables, identify the graphic or picture and its matching Challenge menu criterion.

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Identify the person at your table with the most years of experience in Child Nutrition Programs. That person is your Scribe/Reporter for this activity. Please stand at your table when you have completed this activity.

**Do:** Set your timer for about 3 minutes. Stop the table activity when some are standing. Allow participants to discuss answers by calling on two or three Scribe/Reporters.

**Instructor Note:** Divide pages of your flip chart—3 columns across, 3 rows down, to match Windowpane. As answers are reported, record them on the flip chart. When the activity is complete, tear off the flip chart page and post it on an unused wall for participants to review.

#### Key Points for Instructor during Windowpane Activity:

- 5 different vegetable—offer at least 5 different vegetables on your menu each school week. These vegetables can be fresh, frozen, or canned. Canned may help keep your food cost down but remember, they are usually higher in sodium. When you are able, include fresh and frozen vegetables. Having a self-serve fruit and vegetable or salad bar or even offering pre-plated salads increases opportunities to include vegetables in your menus.
- Dry beans and peas served once a week; minimum of ¼ cup serving—the HUSSC requires that dry beans and peas be offered at least once a week.
- 5 different fruits—At least 5 *different* fruits must be offered each week. While oranges, apples, and bananas might be familiar to many of your students, your goal is to expose them to new fruits they may not have had the opportunity to experience in their homes. These can be fresh, frozen, or canned. Canned may help you keep your food costs down. Studies with children indicate it takes repeated exposure to a new food for children to begin to accept it.
- Whole grain—for the Gold awards, offer at least 1 whole-grain product each school day (**at least 2 must be different for variety**), and for the Bronze and Silver levels, offer whole-grain products 3 days a week (at least 2 must be different). The majority of whole grain food products served must have the whole grain(s) listed first in the ingredient statement.
- Low-fat milk—offer only low-fat (1%) and fat-free (skim) milk every school day. Remember that 2% milk is not low-fat—it is reduced fat milk.
- If you are going for the Bronze or Silver levels, you will need to offer at least one serving of fresh fruit each week. Those striving for the Gold will offer at least 2 servings of fresh fruit each week.
- Limit counting juice as a fruit or vegetable to 1 time per week.
- Every student has the opportunity to select a HUSSC lunch—the basic premise of the HealthierUS School Challenge is that every student has the opportunity to select a meal that meets the criteria of the Challenge.
- Dark green and orange vegetables—you will want to include dark green or orange vegetables 3 or more times a week.

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### Structuring a Menu to Meet the Challenge Criteria

(15 minutes with Activity 2)

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#### **Say:**

The way you plan and serve your school menus may relate to the HealthierUS School Challenge basic philosophy that “every child has the opportunity to select a menu that meets the HealthierUS School Challenge.” This philosophy does not mean that every student has to *select* the menu options planned to meet the Challenge, just that if they wanted to select the healthier items, they could do so. Let’s look at a few ways to plan and serve menus.

#### Activity 2

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#### Materials Needed

Handout 1.2: *Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge*

Handout 4.2: *Sample Weekly Menus*

Handout 4.3: *Evaluating the Sample Weekly Menus Activity*

**Say:** Look at Handouts 4.2, *Sample Weekly Menus* and Handout 4.3, questions corresponding to the menus. We are going to use these menus and questions to practice evaluating menus to determine if the HUSSC criteria are met.

Menu #1 is a simple menu with limited choices. Choices may be just choice of milk and what to choose from the salad bar. This type of menu is popular in elementary schools. Let us work together to answer the questions for Menu #1 on Handout 4.3.

**Do:** Ask the questions about menu #1 and allow participants to respond.

**Ask:** How many of you have a similar menu in any of your schools?

**Do:** Allow participants time to respond.

Review answers about each menu after participants have had time to work on the answers with their group.

**Say:** Now move to the questions about Menu #2. This menu structure is also commonly used when a school wants to provide students with an alternate choice. In this case the choice is what is on the regular serving line choices OR a bagged lunch with a PBJ sandwich.

**Do:** Allow participants time to answer the questions about menu #2 in their small groups. Review answers about this menu after participants have had time to work on the answers with their group.

**Say:** Look now at Menu #3. . . Note that some of the entrées are “bundled” with the grains/bread, others are not.

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With this type menu structure, students can select from several side dishes but are generally limited to just a few choices. Complete this menu and then we will review the answers.

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#### Evaluating and Modifying Sample Menus to Meet the Challenge Menu Criteria (20 minutes with Activity 3)

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##### Materials Needed:

Handout 4.4: *Sample Menus 4 and 5*

Handout 4.5: *Lunch Menu Worksheet – Gold or Gold Award of Distinction*

##### Say:

- You have Handouts 4.4 and 4.5 for this last activity on the Challenge menu criteria. Handout 4.4 has two weeks menus, Menu #4 and Menu #5. Handouts 4.5 are two Lunch Menu Worksheets for the Gold/Gold Award of Distinction. Note that the menu submitted for the HealthierUS School Challenge certification has to be a **menu that has already been served to students—not just a planned menu**. USDA wants to be sure that your school is actually serving these healthy menus to its students
- Each group will need to spend some time reviewing the menus. For this activity we will evaluate the menus using the Gold criteria since it is more of a challenge! Use Handout 4.5, the Lunch Menu Worksheet for the Gold Awards and identify how the menus meet the Challenge menu criteria, and then describe how you would modify the menu to meet the criteria.
- As you work through this activity, if you determine that the menu does not meet the Gold criteria, check to see if the menu meets the Bronze/Silver criteria, using Handout 4.6.
- First you need to identify a Scribe/Recorder for your table. Again, all point to the person at your table you'd like to be the Scribe/Reporter for your group.
- Take out your handouts and let's fill in one together. We will go through one day as a group.

**Do:** Review the first day together as an entire group and place menu items in the correct place on the worksheet.

**Say:** You have about 10 minutes to evaluate your menus and think of ways you can modify the menu before we start reporting.

**Do:** Set timer. After 10 minutes, stop the activity. Review the groups' responses. Provide participants with the Answer Sheets for their later review.

##### Lesson Summary (5 minutes)

Ask the participants to discuss one idea they learned in this lesson and if they could use the idea in their school nutrition operation.